A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECT NOVELS OF NAMITA GOKHALE & ANITA NAIR :THE 21st CENTURY FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Synopsys Submitted to

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

For the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in English under the faculty of Humanities

Researcher

Bhagyashri Shivaji Madewad

M.A. Engllish SET

Research Supervisor

Dr. Bhagwan Gunjalwad

Associate Professor & Head Department of English

K. R. M. Mahila Mahavidhyalaya, Nanded

Research center

School of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies

S.R.T.M.U. Nanded, 431606

April 2022

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECT NOVELS OF NAMITA GOKHALE & ANITA NAIR: THE 21st CENTURY FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Introduction:

Feminism is a belief that women should be allowed same rights, power and chances as men and be treated in the same way or the set of activities intended to achieve this state. This expression is as old as the English language. From the centuries women were portrayed as the souls of dependence. Women's worldview is formed by the experiences women has lived. It is apparent but often-overlooked fact that everyday experiences of women are not the same as men. Feminist perspective highlights the social issues that are often overlooked or misidentified by already present social theories. Feminist perspective uses conflict theory to examine the reinforcement of the gender role and inequalities. The proponents of feminist perspective argues that the relation between women and men cannot be reduced to differences in biological functions. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. Feminism is range of sociopolitical movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economical, personal, and social equality of the men &women. Since the late 20th century, many newer forms of feminism have emerged. Some forms of feminism have been criticized for taking into account to educate white, middle class, heterosexual perspective. Feminism should aim to create a 'genderless' inwhich men and women's are equal. Men and women are complementary to each other.

About the author:

Namita Gokhale is an Indian writer, editor,festival director and publisher. She is born in 1956 Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.She was raised in Nainital by her aunts and her grandmotherShakuntala Pande. She studies English literature at Jesus and Merry college at Delhi University, at the age of 18 she married Rajiv Gokhale and had two daughters while she was a student. She refused to attend the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, and was dismissed from university by age 26. By forty, Rajiv Gokhale had survived cancer and her husband had died. Gokhale began editing and managing the 1970s era film magazine *Super*, and continue publishing the magazine for 7 years, while student, at age 17.She is also the co-founder of Yatra Books, established in 2005 with Neeta Gupta.Her debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion* was released in 1984, and she has since written fiction and nonfiction, and edited nonfiction collection. She conceptualized and hosted the *Doordarshan* show *Kitaabnama: Books and Beyond* and is a founder and co-editor of the Jaipur Literature festival. She won the 2021 Sahitya Academy Award.

Fiction:

1. Paro: Dreams of Passion,
1984
2. Gods, Graves, and Grandmother,1994

3.Priya: In Incredible Indyaa,2011
4.Things to Leave Behind,2016
5. The Blind Matriarch,2021.
6. The Book of Shadow

1. The book of Shadow:

Rachitais a young university lecturer from Delhi, whose face has been disfigured in an acid attack. Her fiancé Anand had commited suicide by hanging himself and, blaming Rachita for his death, his sister take revenge by throwing acid on her face. In the novel *The Book of Shadow* by Namita Gokhale, the main character moves between different levels of unexplored consciousness as she tries to grasp her new reality. The tale of the novel revolves around the matter of acid attack.

2. *Things to Leave Behind*:

It is historical novel and the novel, *Things to Leave Behind,* sets out to do this for Kumaon in Uttarakhand. It is the story of feisty young Tilottama Dutt, whose uncle hangs when he protects the reigning order-and her daughter, Deoki, who will confront change as Indians and as women*. Things to Leave Behind*brings alive the romance of the mixed legacy of the British Indian past. Full of fascinating backstory of Naineetal and its unwilling entry into Indian history, throwing a shinning light on the elemental confusion of caste, creed and culture, illuminating with painstaking detail.

3. *The Blind Matriarch:*

The Blind Matriarch, Matangi-ma, lives on the topmost floor of an old house with many stories. From her eyries, she hovers unseeingly over the lives of her family. Her long time companion Lali is her emissary to the world. Her three children are by turn overprotective and dismissive to her. Her grandchildren are coming to term with old secrets and growing pains. Life goes on this way until one day a world comes to a standstill-and they all begin to look inward. This assured novel records the different registers in the complex inner life of an extended family. Like the nation itself, the strict hierarchy of the joint-family home can be dysfunctional and yet it is this home that often provides unexpected relief and succour to the vulnerable within its walls. As certainties disappears, their findings lead to new beginnings and Matangi-Ma remembered her past which is again infront of her that is the situation of pandemic is co-joining with her lives, the narrative follows middle India, even as it records the struggles for individual growth, with successive generation trying to break out the situation of the comprehensive Indian family. Rising and falling like the waves of a pandemic causes the critical situation, the novel is a realistic chronicle of the tragedies of India's encounter with the Coronavirus, the cynicism and despair that accompanied it and the re-silence and strength of the human spirit.

Anita Nair is an Indian woman novelist who writes her books in English language. She is best known for her novels *A Better Man, Mistress,* and *Lessons in Forgetting*. She has also written poetry, essays, short stories, crime fiction, historical fiction, romance, and children's

literature, including Muezza and Baby Jaan: stories from Kuran. Anita Nair was born in Shoranur, Palakkad district of Kerala. Anita Nair was educated in Chennai before returning to Kerala. She won Arch of Excellence Award by all India Achiever's conference, New Delhi for literature, in 2012 she is awarded Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, for her contribution to literature and culture.

1.Ladies Coupe:

Ladies coupe is the story of a women's search for freedom and women's condition in the male dominated society. It has turned out to be a great success. The novel raises the question whether the role of an Indian women's as a representative of other women. This novel is written in 2001. Ladies Coupe questions the status of women in a traditional bound social order that sees women exclusively in the role of an obedient daughter, a docile wife and breeder of children. Anita Nair compared her novel to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* told by a band pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury. They are the collection of stories in frame. Likewise, in *Ladies Coupe*, Anita Nair depicts six women in the railway compartment, each having a story to tell. By narrating the stories of six women, Nair moves from a state of active presence, from the kitchen and the bedroom to the street and the world at large. These are the stories which together make a single story of women rediscovering their bodies. Six women character of Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* are- Akhila, Janaki Prabhakar, Prabha Devi, Margaret Paulraj, Sheela Vasudevan, and Marikolunthu.

2.Lessions In Forgetting:

Anita Nair is one of the eminent leading novelist in the realm of Indian writing in English. *Lessions in Forgetting* is one of the most appreciated novel written by her. This novel throws light on the aspiration and struggle of women in the modern society where everything is under the male dominance. This novel narrates the tale of Meera who is the chief protagonist of the novel. Meera lives in her ancestral Lilac House with her mother and grandmother.They have good time and lives happily in the house. But the death of Meera's father brings them in hardship. The unfavorable circumstances happen in their life and they lead a simple life.Meera never aspire more than requirement. Giri sees Meera and at first side he falls in love with her. Giri and Meera's relationship demands dedication, sacrifice and respect. He spend time with Meera. Both have two children but Giri has specific purpose to marry Meera. He has aspiration for wealth. He is very ambicious and he wants to start his own business. For that he wants a handsome amount. He convinces Meera about the project and suggests her to sell the Lilac House. Meera refuses to sell. That's why Giri disappears from her life. After that Meera faces a lot of problems financially as well as mentally to run the house and nurture her children. She decide to take up a job to meet her ends.

3.The Better Man:

Anita Nair's novels are a combination of liberal voices of Indian women. The present novel analyses the role of narrative techniques of memory, flashback and the contrast and parallels between women of the past and present. The women characters subsequently evolve around and mold themselves into individuals with free thought and identity. Her

women characters prove themselves to be strong and assertive.On the other hand Namita Gokhale's novels are mostly all about women. Her protagonists like Paro and Priya *Paro : Dreams of Passion*, *Gods, Graves and Grandmother's* Gudiya, Parvati in *A Himalayan Love Story,* Ruchita of the *Book Of Shadows* and Shakuntala in the novel *Shakuntala*, Tilottama Dutt from*Things to Leave Behind* and Matangi-Ma from *The Blind Matriarch*all have followed the course and concern of their own life: weather as a little child, adult lady, career oriented and as a married woman. As the intricacy in human relationship is an instrument in developing the self of an individual, a woman has to face discrimination, sense of insecurity, sexual harassment to which she is exposed everywhere in their world.

Contribution of women writers In Indian English writing:

Women writers in India are moving forward with strong and recognized for their individuality and originality. Among the top bestselling authors in India Anita Nair and Namita Gokhale earn fame as writer in English through their works. The Indian English women writers includes Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahari, Manju Kapur, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Nair, Namita Gokhale etc. Anita Nair is an Indian bestselling author of fiction and poetry with her famous novel *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe* translated into 21 languages. Namita Gokhale had written 18 novels including fiction and nonfiction.

21st century Indian feminist Perspective:

Feminism in India is a set of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic and social rights and opportunities for women in India. It is the pursuit of women's rights within the society of India. Feminists in India seeks gender equality: the right to work for equal wages, the right to equal access to health and education and equal political rights. Indian feminists also have fought against culture-specific issues within India's patriarchal society. The history of feminism in India can be divided into three phases; the first phase, beginning in the mid 19th century, initiated when reformists began to speak in favor of women rights by making reforms in education, customs involving women, the second phase from 1915 to Indian independence, when Mahatma Gandhi incorporated women's movements into the *Quit* India *Movement* and independent women's organization began to emerge and finally the third phase, post-independence, which has focused on fair treatment of women at home after marriage, in the workforce and right of involvement in political party.

Despite the progress made by Indian Feminist movement women living in modern India still face many issues of discrimination. India's patriarchal culture has made the process of gaining land ownership rights and access to education challenging. In the past two decades, there has also emerged a trend of sex selective abortion, acid attack etc. To Indian feminists, there are seen injustice worth struggling against and feminism is misunderstood by Indian as female domination rather than equality.

As in the west, there has been same criticism of feminist movements in India. They have especially been criticized for focusing too much on privileged women and neglecting the needs and representation of poorer or lower caste women. This has led to the creation of caste specific feminist organizations and movements.

Aims and Objectives:

The aims and objectives of the synopsis concentrate on the fictional writings of the two writers Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair. The selected novels distinguish and degenerate methods of composing and determines the 21st century Indian perspectives in the works of Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair. The aims and objectives of proposal research are as follows:

1) To break the patriarchy and establish self identity.

2) To study feminism not about worries and depression but about happiness and expectations.

3) To see the tremendous change in the life of women through the selected novels.

4)To critically analyze women's emancipation from the cage and Indian social taboos.

6) To explore the traditional bond of the Indian joint family.

7) to display women's self discovery and self realization.

Rational of the study:

The rational of the research is completely concentrate on feminist perspective as women's aspiration, struggle, worries and depression from that to get a stand for self discovery and self-realization in select novels of Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair. The select women writers represented suppression against women and how Indian women are victimized by men and patriarchal society. The rational of the research is to study socially, economically and politically neglect Indian women and from that situation how they get self stand.

Hypothesis:

The present research focuses on the following hypothesis:

1) Patriarchal domination is found in Indian society.

2)Women aspire for happiness and expectations.
3) Indian women changed after post Independence feminist era.

4) Indian women are caged and suppressed by Indian social taboos.

5) Traditional bond of Indian joint family is explored through selected novels.

6) Self realization and self discovery is portrayed through selected novels.

Research Methodology:

This present research proposal is a comparative study. It uses textual qualitative

descriptive method of analysis. It comparatively analyzes primary sources. The primary sources include Namita Gokhale's *The Book of Shadow (2001), The Blind Matriarch (2021)* and *Things to Leave Behind (2016)*, Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe, Lessions in Forgetting(2010), The Better Man*. The research also focuses on complete observation of Indian women writers fiction in the feminist perspective. The women character in the select fiction are as a child, carrier oriented or a married woman who is socially, politically and economically suppressed by male dominated patriarchal society. Who search for self identity. The study is deep observation of characters and find out the real problems, sufferings, struggle and depression and after that they get self-stand and became self discovered and self realized person.

Data Collection :

The data for the research study is collected from primary and secondary sources. The data is comparatively analyzed. Data collecting by using original text by Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair will take place by dividing into two categories.

A. Primary Data :

The main primary sources are as follows:
1. The Book of Shadow (2001)
2. Things to Leave Behind, (2016)
3. The Blind Matriarch (2021)
4. Ladies Coupe (2001)
5. Lession In Forgetting(2010)
6. The Better Man(1999)

B. Secondary Data:

The secondary source is the source that provides second hand information and critical books. The secondary source include reference books on Indian English literature specially woman's literature. The secondary source also includes biographies and critical studies of author's select works. Research paper published in National and International Journals of English Literature and related research dissertations on shodhganga. Secondary sources as well include E-resources secondary sources will be analyzed in qualitative and quantitative level.

Tentative chapterization:

The present research is divided into following five tentative chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

The first chapter is introduction. It includebasic information of concept and definition of comparative study. Definition of fiction with a brief history of Indian English Fiction. This chapter concludes with bibliography of the select women writers and literature review.

A) Biography Namita Gokhale:

Namita Gokhale is an Indian writer, editor, festival director and publisher. She is born in 1956 Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. Namita Gokhale wrote her first book, Paro: Dreams of Passion in 1984.Namita Gokhale's second book is *God, Graves and Grandmother.* Namita Gokhale was raised in Nainital by her aunts and her grandmotherShakuntala Pande. The experience of love and passion, illness and death, has shaped Namita Gokhale's work.Gokhale began editing and managing the 1970s era film magazine Super, and continue publishing the magazine for 7 years while she was student at age 17.She is also the co-founder of Yatra Books, established in 2005 with Neeta Gupta.Her debut novel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion* was released in 1984, and she has since written fiction and nonfiction , and edited nonfiction collection. She conceptualized and hosted the *Doordarshan* show *Kitaabnama: Books and Beyond* and is a founder and coeditor of the Jaipur Literature festival. She won the 2021 Sahitya Academy Award. Namita Gokhale's most recent novel, *Shakuntala: The Play of Memory (2005),* first appeared inHindi translation before the English edition was published. Namita Gokhale has also written two books of essays The *Book of Shiva* (2001) and *Mountain Echoes* (1998).

B) Biography of Anita Nair:

Anita Nair is an Indian woman novelist who writes her books in English language. She is best known for her novels A Better Man, Mistress, and Lessons in Forgetting. She has also written poetry, essays, short stories, crime fiction, historical fiction, romance, and children's literature, including Muezza and Baby Jaan: stories from Kuran. Nair was born in Shoranur, Palakkad district of Kerala. Nair was educated in Chennai before returning to Kerala. She won Arch of Excellence Award by all India Achiever's conference, New Delhi for literature, in 2012 she awarded Kerala Sahitya Academy Award, for her contribution to literature and culture. Anita Nair was working as creative director of an advertising agency in Banglore when she wrote her first book, a collection of short stories called *Satyr of the Subway,* which Anita Nair sold to Har-Anand Press. Anita Nair's second book was published by Penguin India and was the first book by Indian author to published by Picador USA. Anita Nair won a fellowship from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts for her first work.

C) Literature review:

The review of literature involves detail literary study in the field of relevant subject. It includes study of Indian English Writing. The proposed research surveys Indian women fiction in a comparative manner. There are sufferings of women,their hardships. In Indian feminist fictionsocial inequality, sexual and domestic harassment of women in day to day lives by men. In recent years Indian Literature is valued atInternational level and broadly discussed in various ways. Writers like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahari, Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair etc. got great success in writing. The prominent books are Anita Desai's *In Custody*(1984), Jhumpa Lahari's*The Namesake*(2003), Anita Nair's *Mistress* etc. These books discuss various female issues. Literature review taken from international journal, national news paper and inflibnet etc.

Chapter Two: Patriarchy and self identity

Actually feminism is a wider conceptual over the world. Here women writers become the voices of women. In the work *The Book of Shadow, Things to Leave Behind & Ladies Coupe* we can see how women get self identity by breaking the patriarchy.Here these women writers want to show the society how women are great in their own way but always marginalized, neglected, suppressed by society.

Chapter Three: Exploration of traditional bond of the Indian joint family

The third chapter deals with traditional bond of Indian joint family in society. Through the work of Namita Gokhale's *The Blind Matriarch*. It include comparative analysis of select novels of Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair.

Chapter Four :Comparative study of Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair

The fourth chapter deals with comparative study of Namita Gokhale and Anita Nair's select works.

Chapter five: Conclusion

The fifth and final chapter deals with conclusion for future research. It will sum up findings and a comparative value of research. Finally the research traces the relevance of feminist perspective through subjugation, inequality, domination, self-respect, self-identity of women and get stand for herself and became a modern Indian women.

References:

1. Roy Devapriya (9 Feb 2019) The sisterhood The Indian Express retrieved 23 June 2021 Nair
2. Anita Nair, The Better Man,New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2000, Print.
3. Ladies Coupe. New Delhi, Penguin books, 2001, print
4. Nair, Anita, *Lessions in Forgetting,* India: Harper Collins, 2010. Print
5. Anand, Paro (4 July 2011) Climbing shoes outlook, Retrieved19 June 2021
6. Sahitya Akademi announces awards in 20 languages. The Hindu 30 December 2021
7. Myles, Anita. Feminism and the postmodern Indian women Novelist in English, New Delhi: Prabhas Publication,2006
8. IyangarShrinivasa, Indian Writing in English, Sterling publishers Pvt. Ltd. updated edition, 1 December 2012
9. oxford dictonary,10th edition,2022 print
10. M H Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, independently published, 2020
11. *The Blind Matriarch,* Penguin Random House India Private Limited,2021
12. *Things to Leave Behind*, Penguin UK,2016
13. *The Book of Shadow*, published by Abacus,2001

Webliography :

1. Inflibnet
2. Google scholar
3. Shodhganga
4. http://en.wekipedia.org
5. http://newint.org
6. http://impressions.org
7. http://www.academia.edu
8. http://www.penguin.co.in
9. http://literaturefestival.com

Place: Nanded
Date: April 2022

Researcher
Bhagyashri Shivaji Madewad
MA English SET

Research Supervisor